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Japan

Fresh Vegetables Report

MHW Begins Inspections on Vegetables and Raw

Meat Products

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Report Highlights:

MHW has established an inspection system to check for bacteria on vegetables and raw meat products sold through twenty central markets.

Includes PSD changes: No
Includes Trade Matrix: No
Unscheduled Report
Tokyo[JA1], JA

Below is a translated newspaper article on the new inspection system for bacteria established by the Ministry of Health and Welfare (MHW). The inspections are limited to organically produced or water-cultivated (hydroponic) vegetables and some raw meat products. As most U.S. exports of organic products to Japan are either processed or distributed directly to importers rather than through the central markets, we expect that the impact will be minimal on imports from the U.S. and other foreign countries. In addition, conventionally or traditionally grown products will not be inspected.

MHW to Inspect Meat and Vegetable in Markets As Precautionary Measures Against Further Food Poisoning

The Ministry of Health and Welfare will inspect for bacteria that cause food poisoning on vegetables and meat in the central wholesale markets around Japan. The inspection targets organically grown or water-cultured vegetables, and exempts conventionally grown vegetables. MHW is investigating contamination of generic *Escherichia coli*, enterohemorrhagic *E. coli* O-157 and *Salmonella*. This is the first nationwide investigation on *Salmonella* and *E. coli* contamination. The results are planned to be released within this fiscal year.

MHW initiated the inspection on vegetables and meat in response to the recent increase of *Salmonella* food poisoning incidents and the enterohemorrhagic *E. coli* O-157 detected

on radish seeds. Generic *E. coli* is included in order to grasp the contamination degree of organic vegetables using compost.

Vegetables targeted in the inspection are those mainly consumed raw-- *daikon* radish, carrot, cabbage, green onion, lettuce, cucumber, tomato, bulb onion, *kaiware* radish sprout and alfalfa sprout. Meat products to be inspected are minced meat and beef liver for raw consumption.

On June 30, MHW requested twenty prefectures with central wholesale markets to carry out the inspection, which will continue until December. There has been so far no report of detection of either *E. coli* O-157 or *Salmonella*. --

Nihon Nogyo Shimbun, July 16, 1998